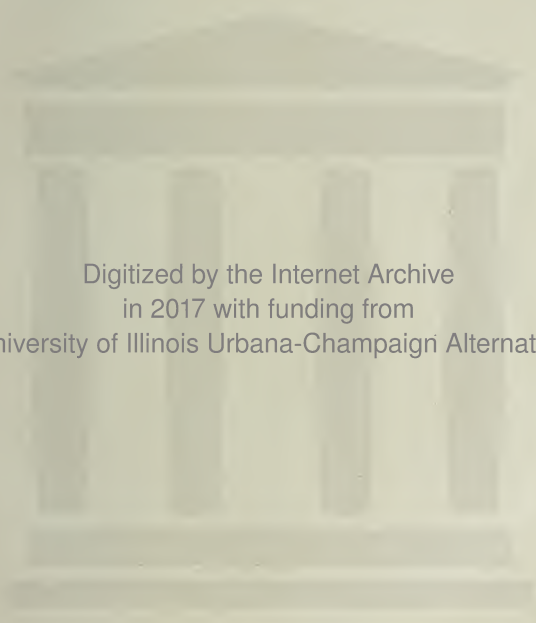


★Prison Assoc. of N. Y.

July 17 08

Girls' Reformatories.





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2017 with funding from
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Alternates

<https://archive.org/details/reasonsforestabl00letc>

364

L56r

31 F 14 N. M. R.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The reasons given herewith for establishing a separate girls' reformatory instead of building a department for girls in connection with the State Industrial School at Rochester are as pertinent to-day as when they were presented to the Speaker of the Assembly in 1887. While the change of site and the further development of this institution are receiving consideration, these reasons are again presented, in the hope that they may be of some service in perfecting our state system for conducting this important work.

WM. P. LETCHWORTH,

Ex-Commissioner State Board of Charities.

(Glen Iris,) PORTAGE, P. O., N. Y.,

JANUARY 26th, 1903.

REASONS

For establishing a separate girls' reformatory instead of
rebuilding on the old site the edifice recently
destroyed by fire at the

STATE INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL

FORMERLY

THE WESTERN HOUSE OF REFUGE

ROCHESTER, N. Y.

EMBODIED IN A LETTER ADDRESSED TO

THE HON. JAMES W. HUSTED,

Speaker of the Assembly,

BY

WM. P. LETCHWORTH,

Commissioner of the State Board of Charities,
Eighth Judicial District,
State of New York.



BUFFALO, N. Y.
ART-PRINTING WORKS OF MATTHEWS, NORTHRUP & CO.
Office of the "Buffalo Morning Express."
1887.

To the Honorable James W. Husted, Speaker of
the Assembly:

Sir,—Having been asked by several members of the Legislature what were my reasons for objecting to an appropriation by the State, to rebuild on its old site the main building of the Girls' Department of the State Industrial School, at Rochester, I conclude, in order to answer more fully their inquiries, and possibly future ones, to submit to you my reasons therefor.

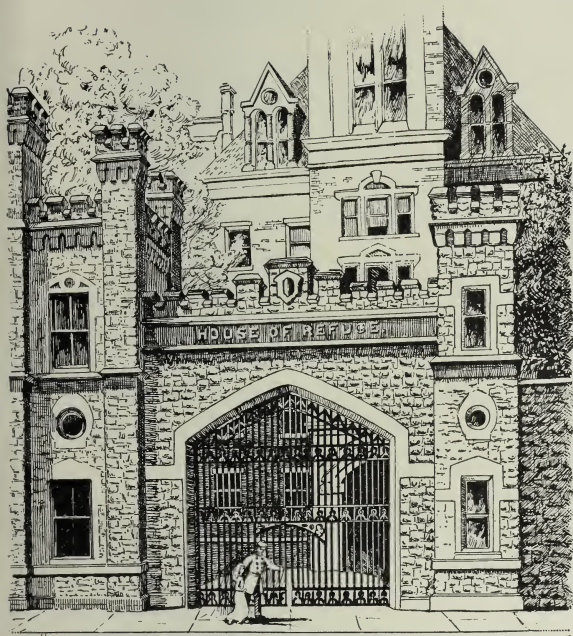
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REFUGE.

The State Industrial School at Rochester, N. Y., formerly Western House of Refuge, was

established by an act of the Legislature, in 1846. It was set forth in the organizing act, Chapter 143, that the Courts thereby authorized to make commitments to this institution "*shall* sentence to said House of Refuge *every* male under the age of *eighteen* years, and *every* female under the age of *seventeen* years, who shall be convicted before such Court of any *felony*." To the same Courts was also given *discretionary* power to commit for petit larceny, and, in the county of Monroe, for vagrancy. The Refuge was empowered to retain control over such inmates, in the case of males, until they were twenty-one years of age, and in the case of females, until they were eighteen years of age.*

In view of the mature age of some of the inmates, and the fact that the Refuge was

* By Chapter 304, Laws of 1850, the organizing Act was amended so that females could not be committed.



MATTHEWS, NORTHROP & CO.

Main entrance to the State Industrial School, formerly Western House of Refuge, Rochester, N. Y.

primarily designed for felons, and that it was planned more than forty years ago, when modern ideas respecting more open and natural systems had not been advanced, the Refuge was constructed on the prison plan, with high surrounding walls, massive iron gates, and secured within by bars and gratings. Although some interior and other changes have been effected since it was first built, its external aspects are still those of a penal institution, bearing a striking resemblance, as we approach it, to the State Prison at Auburn. Chapter 304, Laws of 1850, limited the committing age to sixteen years, and Chapter 539, Laws of 1886, changed the name of the Refuge to The State Industrial School; but the State-prison and penal-like aspect of the institution remain unchanged. Under such circumstances, it does not seem wise to here incarcerate girls, many of whom are of

tender years, and keenly susceptible to these forbidding conditions.

THE GIRLS' DEPARTMENT.

Although, as just stated, the age of commitment to the Refuge has been reduced, although the name of the institution has been changed to imply conformity with a more open system, the gloomy, wall-encompassed girls' department established so late as 1875, was even more prison-like than the main Refuge.

The girls occupied two buildings, in separate yards, surrounded by stone walls twenty-two feet high. Within these circumscribed limits they were confined through the weary years of their bondage, debarred from the refreshing and elevating influences of Nature, which are their natural privilege. In summer, shut, as they were, within these hot walls, denied the shady grove, the songs of birds, the prospect

tice felt by the young prisoner engender a feeling of bitterness against society which imposes these cruel conditions? In no light can this close confinement be considered necessary except in consequence of the contiguity of the male and female departments. Then why should we not separate them and place girls where these repressing restrictions may be dispensed with? If these formidable walls and forbidding iron gates and strong fastenings, so calculated to inspire fear, if not despair, in the minds of the young, are not necessary, is it just or merciful on the part of the State to retain them? A high authority, Mr. George E. Howe, Superintendent of the State Reform School at Meriden, Conn., speaking from an experience of some three years with the prison plan of reform and nineteen years with the open or family system, says:

“The prison principle in reform particularly

outrages the nature of child life. The shock penetrates to the end of its being, and body and soul rise up against it in the fiercest antagonism. * * * Whatever may be said of the penal institution for the rectification of adult and matured depravity, as a system for the wayward child it is a barbarism, a worthy relic of the harsh and heartless ages of the past, and belongs not to this age, so irradiated by influences that prize degraded humanity at something of the value put upon it by the redeeming, loving Christ."

BOARD OF CONTROL.

The Board of Managers of the State Industrial School at Rochester, is composed of fifteen members, appointed by the Governor and approved by the Senate. In this Board there is no woman's voice to plead the

cause of her sex. While it may be desirable that a reformatory for boys should have the majority of its Board of Managers men, it is highly important that a majority of the Board of Managers of a reformatory for girls should be women. The members of a board composed entirely of men cannot, for obvious reasons, hold private interviews with the more mature of the girls, and without such there cannot exist that unreserved confidence between guardian and ward necessary to the protection and elevation of the latter. The relation of the managers to these girls is therefore constrained and unnatural.

It has been demonstrated that women can successfully manage State institutions, and in reformatories for girls I do not hesitate to say that women have done better than men. The Michigan Girl's Reformatory is managed by a board composed of three women and two

men. The president of the Board, the clerk of the Board, and the Superintendent of the Home are all women. So far as I can judge from information gathered on the subject, that institution has been much more successful in reforming girls than the Rochester Refuge, and the Michigan Home, as appears from its last report, has been able to show better financial results.

When we consider the superior fitness of women for directing domestic affairs, for hospital service, for educating children, their efficiency in moral and religious teaching,—when we reflect that institutions for the young should be, as nearly as practicable homes, and that they cannot be such without the motherly influence and authority, it seems an inevitable conclusion that it would be a wise plan to place girls undergoing reformatory treatment under the care and refining influ-

ence of their own sex. A noted specialist in reformatory work for the young, says: "If we can have a reformatory system that will give us woman's ear to listen to little ailments, woman's hand to soften the rigors of young orphaned life, and the sceptre of woman's soft and winning love to rule in that strange kingdom — the heart of a child — then it is immeasurable gain."

CLASSIFICATION.

If I understand the statutes rightly, to this institution may now be committed, under its organizing and amendatory acts and other acts of the Legislature, not only felons, but also the following classes under sixteen years of age: The petty thief, the child arrested for assault and battery, the disorderly, the malicious, the truant from school, the child arrested for begging from door to door, the abandoned child, and the

street prostitute. Among these are included the simply homeless or unfortunate, and those in danger of falling, as well as those guilty of every grade of offense from the most trifling to the most flagrant and repulsive.

Whatever name may be given to a reformatory institution, it takes its character from its most hardened inmates. To commit a girl to an institution which is likewise a receptacle for hardened criminal boys, affixes a stigma upon her character that she can never efface, which ever stands in the way of her advancement and the preservation of that pride of character which is one of the strongest safeguards of virtue. Especially in the case of girls who find their way into the reformatory through homelessness, neglect of parents, or other innocent cause, is the affixing of this stigma, when it can be so easily avoided, a cruel wrong. It would seem the part of wisdom to pause and

consider whether, in this heterogeneous collection of so many classes of either sex, we are conducting this important work in the most intelligent manner.

SEPARATE INSTITUTIONS.

It is now almost universally conceded that reformatories for girls should be separate from those for boys. The experience of the late Mary Carpenter, to whom England is indebted for some of the greatest advances that have been made in juvenile reformatory work, made her a strong advocate of separate systems. At the Kingswood Reformatory, established mainly through her efforts, it was demonstrated that the work for girls should be separated from that for boys; and this was at length accomplished in the establishment of the Red Lodge Reformatory at Bristol. At the celebrated Rauhe Haus Reformatory, near Hamburg, Ger-

many, under the administration of that earnest Christian philanthropist, Immanuel Wichern, it was found necessary to carry on the work for girls elsewhere. In America, we find numerous instances where the principle of separation has been voluntarily accepted, or its adoption compelled by the logic of untoward circumstances.

The testimony of many long engaged in this work shows, that, however high may be the intervening walls, however watchful the supervision over the joint institution, there is correspondence between the inmates of the separate departments; and in one way and another they come to know each other by sight or by name, which acquaintance, in after life, is frequently the means of dragging a girl down after she has regained an upward path in the social scale. Besides, the absorption of thought in petty intrigues, in ingenious contrivances for keeping up illicit correspondence, and the sup-

pressed excitement caused by the receipt of secret dispatches are constant drawbacks in the work of reform.

THE COTTAGE AND FAMILY PLAN.

From various quarters there comes an earnest plea for the cottage plan. One speaking from experience with both systems, says: "In contrast with the destructive nature and methods and the abortive results of the congregate or prison policy, we urge with every instinct of our soul, and on literal knowledge of the actual, tangible, and glorious successes, the claims of the open or family system."

Under the open or cottage system, instead of one great building, as in the old congregate method, there are a number of small cottages in which each household becomes a separate family as distinct from every other as are the

individual families of a village. Each cottage is made complete in itself, with all the apartments necessary to the convenience of a large family, and is so arranged as to carry on separately its domestic work, such as cooking, baking, laundrying, general housework, sewing, etc. Each girl has a plainly furnished room to herself. There is also an apartment for a school-room.

The cottage system conducted on the family plan, not only affords the desired means of classification, by which each girl is brought into personal contact with the officers and teachers, individuality preserved, the graces of home life cultivated, and the tendency to institutionize so common where large numbers are congregated, neutralized; but the farm, which is a necessity with this system, furnishes a variety of outdoor employment and recreation, which, alternating with indoor training in

domestic work and instruction in the schools, provides the best possible advantages to fit the girls for future usefulness, whether in city or country. A girl having the advantages of such varied instruction and training is infinitely better adapted to meet the exigencies of life than one restricted to the monotonous routine of classified labor in a huge building, although it may have its marble wash-stands and more elegant hotel-like furniture.

SAVING IN MAINTENANCE.

It has been demonstrated that institutions conducted on the farm and cottage plan for girls can be maintained equally well, if not better, at a lower cost than by the old plan, notwithstanding the labor of girls is less valuable and more difficult to utilize than that of boys. The per capita weekly cost at Rochester for the year 1886, with an average of 442

inmates, was \$3.82. At the Michigan Industrial Home, for the same year, the per capita weekly rate of maintenance, with an average of 187 girls, was \$2.87 — a difference of ninety-five cents per week, which would make a saving to Michigan in one year over the Rochester system of \$9,237.80.

SAVING AT THE OUTSET.

Not only can a lower rate of maintenance be reached by the farm and cottage plan, but also a large saving in the original expenditure for site, buildings, etc.

The Board of Managers of the State Industrial School have asked from the Legislature the sum of \$135,000 to re-establish and furnish the single burned building for the accommodation of one hundred girls. This is at a per capita rate of \$1,350.

The Michigan Home, conducted on the

cottage and family plan, is a beautiful and complete institution, and provides accommodation for 194 girls. The inventory valuation of the real estate of the Home, including ninety-two acres of land at \$16,000, five cottages, two houses with fixtures, two barns, sheds, and out-buildings, engine and coal house, heating and water apparatus, cisterns, sewers, chapel, etc., etc., as reported to the last

Legislature, was	\$129,200.00
Household and other furniture, organ, bedding, horses, carriages, harness, etc., etc., were valued at	13,663.75
Total, ...	<u>\$142,863.75</u>

Making a per capita estimate for building accommodation, furniture, etc., including *bedding*, of \$736.41, being, as against \$1,350, a sav-

ing of \$613.59 per inmate. This, in making provision for 194 girls on the farm and cottage plan, would effect a saving of \$119,036.46. In other words, Michigan provides for these girls under a better system, at nearly half the cost that New York makes provision for the same class; that is to say, for 194 girls at an outlay of \$142,863.75, as against \$135,000 by New-York State for 100 girls.

SAVING THE EXPENSE OF WALLS.

In adopting the farm and cottage plan, not only is there a saving in the cost of supporting the inmates, and a saving in the outlay for buildings, but there is a large sum saved in dispensing with expensive inclosures. The walls surrounding the girls' department at Rochester, including the division wall between the boys' and girls' yards, measure about 1,750 feet in length. Calculating the stone masonry

at an architect's estimate of fifteen dollars per lineal foot, these formidable inclosures cost \$26,250—a sum in excess of what would be required to purchase a large and excellent farm with substantial buildings.

A goodly sized farm affords the necessary seclusion without the intervention of high walls. Those having charge of institutions on the open system assert, that, under the regulations observed, they are not annoyed with intruders on the premises. Experience has also shown that the attractions of lawns, flowers, shrubbery and trees, combined with varied employment, go far to do away with that intolerable feeling of irksomeness and the desire to escape experienced when the eye encounters on all sides impassable prison barriers.

If the walls surrounding the girls' department at Rochester cannot be used without infracting a fundamental principle in reformation,

the question may be asked whether it would not be better to take them down and convert the valuable material therein into money and appropriate it towards the purchase of a farm.

CO-OPERATING AGENCIES.

In the adoption of a new system for girls, we may hopefully look for the introduction of some new methods which have been found to work highly satisfactory results elsewhere. Among these may be particularized a watchful adjustment of the work to the early restoration of the offender to family life. In the Michigan Home, the character, habits, and capabilities of each inmate are carefully studied, and as soon as it is found that the interests of a girl will be promoted by placing her in a family, it may be after a few weeks, after a few months, or it may be after years in the institution, she is placed in a home, subject, however, to recall.

But this placing-out is not done in a haphazard manner. The home must first be carefully examined and reported upon by a co-operating agency existing in every county, and by means of which later supervision is maintained.

Under our system, whatever change may take place in the offender, or whatever mitigating circumstances affecting the sentence of a child may be developed after commitment, a certain tedious routine must be gone through, occupying from sixteen months to several years, during which time the risk is incurred of the girl becoming incorrigible through the influence of evil associates. It may be that the child has been imprisoned simply in consequence of homelessness, and that a good family is ready to receive it and relieve the State of the expense of its education and support. Although the Governor is empowered to

release from sentence the worst adult criminal, his interference is of no avail in the case of a child committed to a house of refuge. Should there be sent to our reformatory schools, as in England, only those who had been twice previously sentenced to imprisonment or punishment, such a rule respecting detention, so far from being objectionable, might be desirable.

In institutions for girls, much of the co-operative work is specially adapted to women; and in every county and town in the State there could be found those who would voluntarily engage in this service. Thus would come to the aid of the State a strong force of benevolent workers, the value of whose services could not be estimated in money.

ACTION OF CHARITY ORGANIZATIONS.

A substantial reason for the establishment of a separate girls' reformatory may be found in

A Separate Girls' Reformatory. 29

the fact that benevolent organizations, including in their membership many who have bestowed much study on child-saving work and who have collected and compared the experience of practical workers and the results of their labors, favor a separate system.

In its annual report to the Legislature, in 1872, the State Board of Charities recommended the establishment of a separate girls' reformatory in Western New York. The report says :

It would not be difficult to show, therefore, that one, certainly, if not two houses of refuge for girls are immediately needed in the western parts of the State. Exactly where we shall not pretend to indicate, since that is a question to be decided under the light of population, accessibility, and economy of construction and support; nor as to the particular ages within which alone girls should be permitted to enter such institutions. All these are details subordinate to the great fact that an urgent necessity exists, and a solemn responsibility rests upon the State to meet it at the earliest possible moment. We

accordingly recommend that a board of commissioners be appointed to select a site for the construction of such an institution during the coming year.

In its report to the Legislature the following year, the Board repeated this recommendation.

In June, 1874, at a meeting of the State Board of Charities, held at Rochester, plans or drawings were submitted by the Superintendent of the Western House of Refuge, with a proposition to establish a girls' department within that institution. After some earnest discussion, this was disapproved on the ground that a girls' department in a large institution for boys is not desirable.

In February, 1887, the Assembly passed the following resolution :

STATE OF NEW YORK,

IN ASSEMBLY,

ALBANY, February 25, 1887.

Resolved, That the State Board of Charities be requested to report to the Assembly, at their earliest convenience,

their opinion as to the advisability of the establishment and location of a building for the Girls' Reformatory, separate from the Western House of Refuge, to which, up till the recent fire, it has been attached.

By order of the Assembly.

C. A. CHICKERING,
Clerk.

Under date of March 7, 1887, the State Board of Charities made the following answer to the foregoing resolution :

This Board has carefully considered this resolution of the Assembly, and makes answer as follows :

The Board strongly recommends that the Girls' Reformatory should be on a separate site, and under a separate Board of Managers, from the Western House of Refuge (now State Industrial School).

This recommendation is intended to cast no reflection upon the management of the institution as at present conducted at Rochester. It is based upon the broad, and now generally accepted, principle, that the sexes should be separated in all reformatory or training schools, and that institutions for girls should be governed by boards of managers mainly composed of women. This Board

believes that a greater proportion of moral cures among the girls would be secured under the management of a board so constructed.

In further answer to the question of the Assembly, the Board recommends that the buildings for the Girls' Reformatory be erected on the cottage plan, not more than two stories high, and fire-proof, thus affording facilities for classification, and designed as nearly as practicable for family life.

The Board is advised, by its experience, that buildings so planned, having a capacity for 100 inmates, with a suitable site, including sufficient land, would cost less than \$100,000.

The following protest of the State Charities Aid Association was presented to the Committee on Ways and Means of the Legislature, March 8, 1887, by its Secretary, Mr. Wyllys Hodges:

*To the Honorable the Committee on Ways and Means
of the Assembly:*

The State Charities Aid Association of New York protests against the granting of an appropriation to the State

Industrial School at Rochester for the rebuilding of a wing for girls, for the following reasons :

The institution has heretofore been charged with the custody of both boys and girls. This system should not be perpetuated or legally recognized by the State through the medium of appropriations or otherwise.

The experience of all reformatory institutions of this character has shown beyond peradventure that in mixed institutions a separation of the sexes can only be accomplished by prison methods. Such measures are greatly to be deprecated.

Moreover, different methods of treatment and different kinds of work are necessary for the one and the other sex, and these different systems cannot be secured in the same institution, or administered by the same management.

The experience of reformatory institutions in other States has also shown that not only should the immediate supervision of girls be given exclusively to women, but that it is absolutely essential that the government should, in a measure at least, be committed to persons of the same sex as the inmates.

It is certain that the prison character of the Industrial School at Rochester, while necessary, perhaps, for the worst class of boys, cannot be productive of the most beneficial results in the case of girls.

Of all the systems now in use, those which are of a reformatory rather than a correctional character, those that contain the elements of home rather than institutional life, secure the greatest percentage of good results.

This percentage is to be considered in two ways: First, as saving the largest number of persons from a criminal career, and making them self-supporting citizens. Second, as ultimately diminishing to the State the expense of supporting paupers and confining prisoners.

The method of placing reformatory cases behind stone walls in prison-like buildings and under prison discipline, is founded on obsolete ideas, and is not approved or adopted at the present day in the best institutions of Europe or America.

The State Charities Aid Association recommends the following system based upon the experience of experts:

THE COTTAGE SYSTEM.—This system, by dividing the inmates into small families, each with its presiding officer, gives opportunity for exact classification, and for that essential element of reform—personal influence; and yet allows freedom of exercise, house, garden, and farm work,—all so essential to the moral and physical welfare of the inmates.

Properly administered, it obliges the inmates to do for themselves the ordinary housework required of women in

their station of life, thus fitting them to become useful and industrious members of society when released. In large institutions, on the other hand, much of the work has necessarily to be carried on on a different plan.

But even if it were permissible from a reformatory standpoint to condone the bringing together of boys and girls in one institution, the fact remains that the institution in question has at present sufficient accommodation for all the children of both sexes now in its custody, and, therefore, unless it is intended to perpetuate a system which is radically bad, there can be no reason for the present granting of the appropriation.

If additional accommodation is needed, an excellent opportunity now presents itself for the creation of a new institution in the western part of the State exclusively for girls. Such an institution should be founded upon the cottage system. It is much cheaper to erect two-story brick cottages than large and elaborate buildings, and money had better be spent in securing proper administration than for costly structures.

In the erection of such an institution, the successful experience of Ohio, Michigan, Massachusetts, and Connecticut may very well serve to guide the action of our State.

For this reason, the State Charities Aid Association feels impelled to oppose the granting of the appropria-

tion asked, and submits the foregoing suggestion to your Honorable Committee with full confidence that the subject will be considered with the care its importance demands.

For the State Charities Aid Association.

SOPHIE E. MINTON,
Chairman Committee on Children.

21 University Place,
NEW YORK, March 7, 1887.

The following resolution adopted by The Women's Educational and Industrial Union of Buffalo, was presented to the Committee on Ways and Means, March 8, 1887, by the attorney of the Union, Mr. N. S. Rosenau:

Resolved, That this Board, representing a membership of nearly eight hundred women, hereby respectfully and earnestly petition the Legislature of the State of New York to oppose the rebuilding of the Girls' Industrial School in Rochester, on the same site and under the same management as the boys', believing that, in the interest of child-saving, separate institutions should be established and maintained.

A STATE HOME FOR GIRLS.

In other States there are now twenty-one juvenile reformatories exclusively for boys, and there are twelve States having separate reformatories for girls—making in all thirty-three institutions on the separate principle. Most prominent among those having the attractive cottage plan for girls may be mentioned Massachusetts, Connecticut, Ohio, and Michigan. As illustrating somewhat the character and methods of these reformatories, a brief outline of the Michigan Industrial Home is given, with some information gathered from recent correspondence and statistics taken from the last biennial report of the Home to the Michigan Legislature.

The Michigan State Industrial Home for Girls is situated near Adrian, on a farm of ninety-two acres. Its buildings include five



Honor Cottage, designed to accommodate 33 girls, State Industrial Home for Girls, Adrian, Michigan.

tasteful, homelike brick cottages, standing amidst pleasant shade trees and surrounded by lawns, flowers, and shrubbery. These cottages afford the means of making as many different classes of inmates. Four of the cottages accommodate thirty-three girls each, and one was constructed for the accommodation of sixty-two girls.

The single cottages are estimated to cost \$14,000 each, and the large double cottage, \$25,000. The Board of Control, alluding to the advantages of small over large cottages, says:

“We find the large building, erected as an experiment, * * * no more economical, much more difficult to manage properly, and less satisfactory in every way than the smaller ones. The home feeling upon which we rely so much in the work of reformation is in a great measure lost when so large a number are

congregated together, and the girls, instead of having each a sense of being the object of individual interest and care, become a crowd too large to have their interests considered separately."

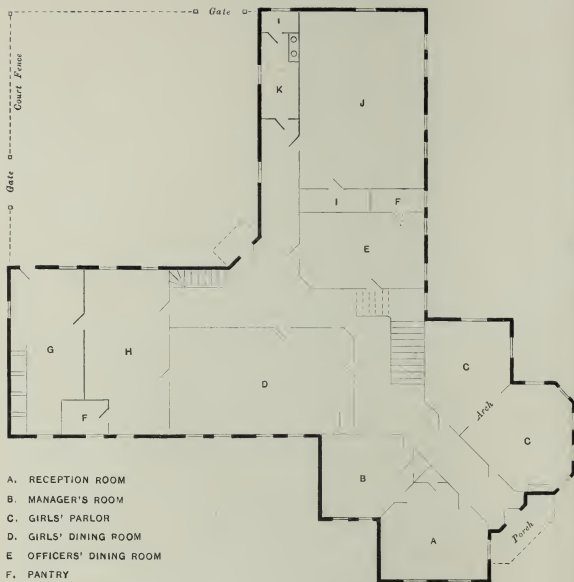
The Superintendent, Miss Scott, in speaking of the number in the large cottage, says:

"I do not think as good work can be done with so large a family, as it is impossible for a manager to know *all* her girls *personally*. The girls feel this when they go from a small cottage to "Central"—our large one. They sometimes say I am only one of a crowd. They miss the *personal* attention that each girl receives in the small family, and which she must have to grow stronger and better."

The institution is under the direction of five managers—three women and two men—who constitute a Board of Control. An earnest, philanthropic woman, Mrs. S. L.

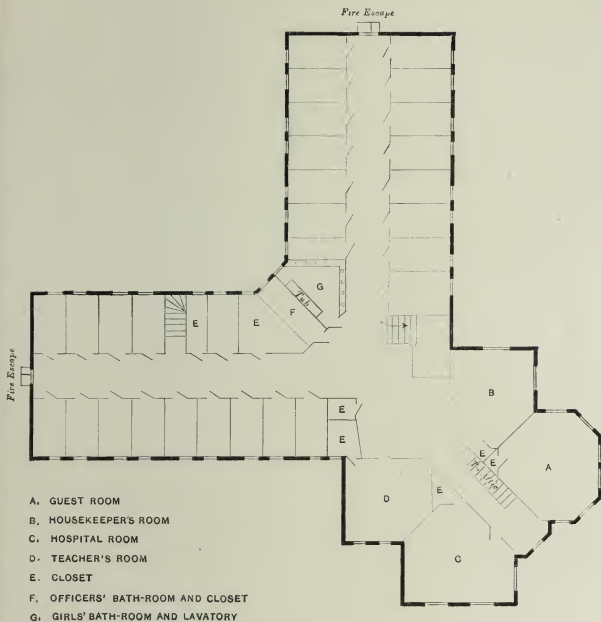
Fuller, acts as President of the Board. The subordinate force within the Home are women.

The Home is not only on what is termed the cottage plan, but the buildings are so constructed that their management may be under the family system. An institution may be built on the cottage plan, but with a common kitchen, dining-room, and other associate arrangements, cannot be conducted on the family principle. Here, the inmates of each cottage form a separate household or family, as distinct from the others as are the separate families of a town or village. At the head of each cottage is a matron, holding the relation of mother to the household. In each cottage there is a teacher who takes charge of the instruction of the girls while they are in school. It is a rule that but one girl shall occupy a room. This is plainly but neatly furnished. Mrs. Fuller attributes the success of the Home



- A. RECEPTION ROOM
- B. MANAGER'S ROOM
- C. GIRLS' PARLOR
- D. GIRLS' DINING ROOM
- E. OFFICERS' DINING ROOM
- F. PANTRY
- G. LAUNDRY
- H. KITCHEN
- I. WORK CLOSET
- J. GIRLS' SEWING AND STUDY ROOM
- K. HAT AND CLOAK ROOM WITH LAVATORY

Honor Cottage, Designed for 33 Girls.
First Floor.



Honor Cottage, Designed for 33 Girls.
 Second Floor.

largely to its being conducted on the family system. Moral and religious influences surround the girls while they are in the institution, and they are watched over after leaving it until they reach maturity.

In the schools are taught reading, writing, spelling, drawing, geography, arithmetic, natural history, household economy, language, composition, physiology, and U. S. history.

The industrial system is thorough, embracing training in all kinds of domestic work, sewing, knitting, etc. During the years 1885-6, the number of articles made in cottage sewing-rooms, including sheets, pillow-cases, comfortables, dress-skirts, aprons, collars, underclothes, stockings, mittens, etc., etc., was 9,670. The number of articles made during this time in the special sewing department, including dresses, cloaks, sacks, stockings, mittens, fancy articles, etc., was 2,439.

The wide range of outdoor and domestic training fits the girls for usefulness whether in city or country life. The Superintendent says:

"The girls have done the work of the several families, made and repaired all the garments, have done the oiling and floor painting, have picked over five hundred and forty-four bushels of beans, transplanted one hundred and nineteen thousand four hundred and sixty tomato plants, picked two thousand one hundred and sixty-eight quarts of berries, have planted potatoes and corn, have done considerable weeding, taken almost the entire care of fifteen acres of lawn.

"The girls received seventeen premiums at the Lenawee County Fair, on bread, canned fruit, fancy work, hand and machine knitting."

The farm and garden products for the years 1885-6 were valued at \$4,969.32. The great variety and abundance of vegetables, fruits, and

other agricultural products raised upon the farm aids to reduce the cost of support.

The State Board of Corrections and Charities in reporting on this admirable institution in 1886, says: "It is with gratification that the Board of Corrections and Charities sees no call made for another cottage, as it is an assurance that the policy pursued at present of putting girls out into families has been found to work successfully. It is a great economy for the State, and undoubtedly the course accompanied with best results for the girls."

In making their last report to the Legislature, the Board of Control says: "The Industrial Home for Girls is no longer an experiment. It has demonstrated its ability to accomplish the results hoped for in its establishment to quite as large an extent as could reasonably have been anticipated. We believe it has become one of the most valuable and

successful of the charitable institutions in the State, and should be cheerfully maintained."

RECOMMENDATIONS.

It is a reformatory institution similar to the Michigan State Industrial Home for Girls, at Adrian, conducted on the cottage and family system, that is now desired in Western New York.

Speaking from an extended observation of various methods of conducting juvenile reformatory work in this and other countries, and a careful examination of their results, and the comparison of the opinions of many specialists of long practical experience in this work, I would recommend the purchase of a good farm of not less than one hundred acres, the soil of which should, in part, be specially adapted to gardening purposes. The site should be a healthful one, having a good water supply and

the requisite sanitary conditions. A selection might be made of a farm having a substantial and capacious dwelling-house, barns, stables, and other out-buildings. In such case, the dwelling-house, with some inexpensive improvements, could be made to answer the purpose of an administration building, as has been elsewhere demonstrated, and save at the beginning, a considerable outlay in this direction, besides giving to the place a homelike character, and making a very different impression upon a newcomer than if the institution were entered through massive iron gates.

Cottages should be erected on the family plan, not in any case to exceed accommodation for thirty-four girls. The buildings should be sufficiently separated from each other to give them a distinctively individual character, and to allow of some lawn space and evergreen planting between the cottages. They should

be constructed of brick, should not be more than two stories in height, and the cost of each should not in any event exceed \$14,000. If built on the Michigan plan, with four stairway exits from the upper floor, it is not imperative that they should be fire-proof, although a moderate additional expense would make them semi-fire-proof. The cottages should be plain yet tasteful, but devoid of elaborate architectural ornamentation. They may be plainer than those of Michigan, and thus still further reduce the expenditure. In addition, there should be a chapel, and all the other buildings and fixtures necessary to the complete outfit of such an establishment with its farm and garden interests.

If care is taken in making the selection of a farm, which, it would seem, should be secured within a cost of \$15,000, and discretion is used in the planning and erection of buildings, I

feel safe in saying that a complete institution to accommodate one hundred girls could thus be provided at an expenditure of not more than \$85,000, including the farm, upon which further buildings could be erected, if required, at the rate of about \$600 per capita; but the economy on this plan does not end in the construction of buildings. The farm, as has been shown, gives opportunity for useful and profitable occupation to the girls, the products of which enter into daily consumption, and thus materially lessen the cost of maintenance through successive years.

CONCLUSIONS.

That this subject is of such importance as to make it worthy the careful attention and deliberate judgment of every legislator, is unquestioned. It is not a business nor a commercial question exclusively affecting this or

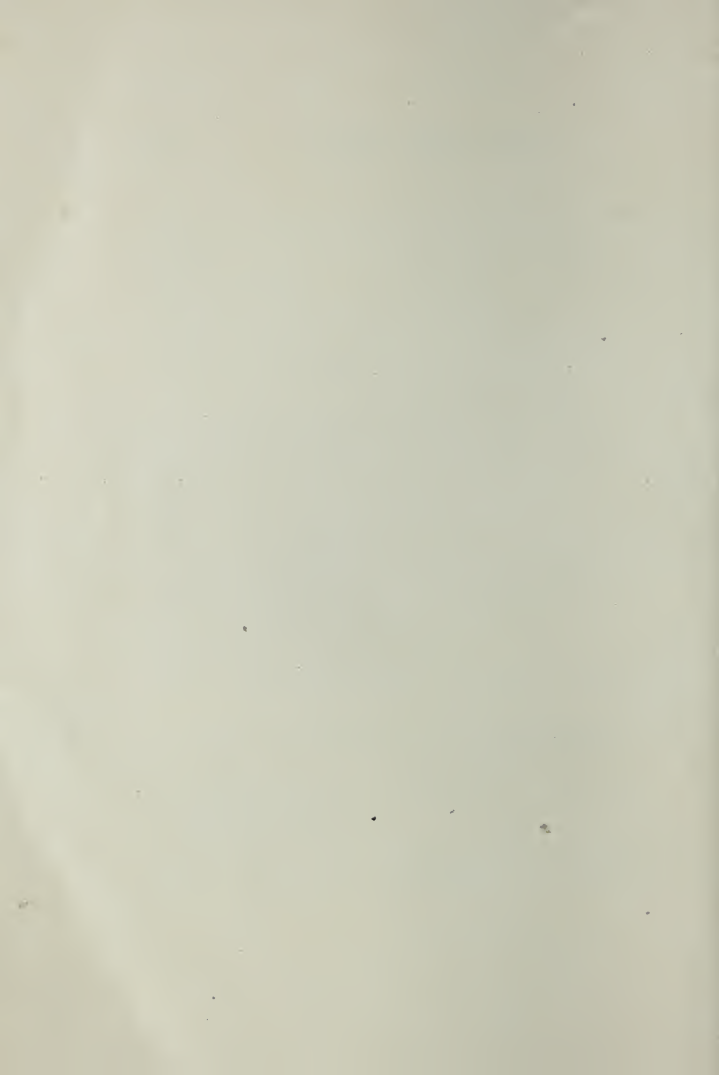
that locality, nor one bearing on public expenditure alone; but, viewed from a higher standpoint, it is as broad as humanity itself, and should be considered in the light of the highest welfare of these children and the best interests of the State.

The way just now seems to be providentially opened for the introduction of advanced principles into our juvenile reformatory work,—principles which shall strengthen the pride every good citizen feels in the institutions of his State. Neglect the opportunity, and we fall into a grave error, the disadvantages of which will be more and more apparent in after years.

Yours, with great respect,

WM. P. LETCHWORTH,
Commissioner.

ALBANY, N. Y., April 7, 1887.







3 0112 072807560